

PROPOSED MISSION STATION ON THE BARRINGTON RIVER.

The Aborigines' Protection Association have furnished us with the following report respecting the state of the blacks on the Barrington River, and the urgent necessity that exists for the establishment of a mission home in their midst. In consequence of certain representations made by the local bench of magistrates at Copeland, the Aborigines' Protection Board communicated with the council of the abovenamed association with reference to the desirability of forming a mission station in the Copeland district, accordingly the Rev. J. B. Gribble, general superintendent of missions, was sent up to inspect and report. On reaching the Barrington he secured the valuable services of Senior-constable Stone, and forthwith visited the native encampments situated about five miles from Copeland, at the foot of the range known as the "Buckets." Here he found two camps, consisting of six gunyals and three broken-down huts, containing in all a population of 65 persons, 30 being blacks and 35 half-castes. Thirty-two of the number are children, 25 of whom are of school age. Mr. Gribble got the whole community together, and explained the object of his visit, to their manifest satisfaction. The pressing needs of the people were at once observable.

The habitations were in a state of utter dilapidation, and, as heavy rain descended during the first visit, all the discomfort to which the unfortunate beings were subject was more than sufficiently proved. The reason of the huts being so utterly unfit for human abode was explained by the absence of bark consequent on the extensive ring-barking of the surrounding country. A small reserve of about 60 acres fronting the river is their only temporary possession, and this is sadly inadequate to their requirements, in view of self-support. There is no cultivation, and, indeed, no signs whatever of industry or self-support. The men catch fish in the river, and some of them are occasionally employed by the neighbouring farmers at a small rate of remuneration.

The men informed Mr. Gribble that they desired to farm their own land, but were unable to do so for want of implements. They had begun to clear the timber on a flat suitable for cultivation, but had been stopped by a white man. The soil being of the richest description, and well adapted for corn, wheat, oats, and potatoes, Mr. Gribble is of opinion that with proper facilities and judicious supervision the land could very soon be made very reproductive. The present requirements are six cottages for families, a

The present requirements are six cottages, a schoolhouse for the children, two horses, dray and plough, and an enlargement of the reserve.

About 40 miles distance there is, according to the constable's report, another camp of 80 aborigines who could be gathered into the mission home. This camp could not be visited for want of time, but an official inspection will be made of it shortly. Within a radius of 60 miles from the Barrington camp Police-constable Stone's report gives an aboriginal population of 300. As regards the necessity of a school for the children, although there is a public school within a short distance of the encampment the natives' children are not admitted for certain reasons. In justice to the Government it must be stated that a number of the old blacks and children receive rations through the local police.
